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tremely useful "List of Printed Guides to and Descriptions of Archives in the United States and Canada" which was prepared under the editor's suggestion by Dr. E. C. Burnett of Brown University. Altogether this first report is one in which the Commission may justly take pride, and for which historical students will be warmly grateful. The Commission has proved its usefulness in the most convincing manner, and its future publications will be awaited with lively interest.

In closing, I should like to urge the publication of future reports in separate volumes. This entire report, comprising nearly 650 pages, is crowded into Vol. I. of the current *Report of the Historical Association* as Art. XXI. That tome is thereby swollen to the dimensions of a dictionary. If the Report of the Manuscripts Commission had been printed in a volume by itself, like Professor Ames's prize essay, it would have presented a better appearance and have been more convenient to use.

EDWARD GAYLORD BOURNE.

The Voyages of the Cabots; Latest Phases of the Controversy. By SAMUEL EDWARD DAWSON, Litt.D. (Laval). [From the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for 1897.] (Ottawa: James Hope and Co. 1897. Pp. 130, 3 maps.)

John and Sebastian Cabot; The Discovery of North America. By C. RAYMOND BEAZLEY, Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1898. Pp. xx, 311.)

Cabot's Discovery of North America. By G. E. WEARE. (London: Macqueen. 1897. Pp. xi, 343, 12 maps and plates.)

It is not easy for one living far from the fields of strife to appreciate the passionate bitterness of disagreement, which has characterized much of the recent discussion of the historical problems associated with the careers of John and Sebastian Cabot. At Oxford, apparently, according to a communication in the *English Historical Review* for January last, Mr. E. J. Payne has been subjected to "odium and some coarse personal vituperation" for holding certain curious notions which continue to be contrary to the received opinion. In Newfoundland and Eastern Canada, the Cabot landfall controversy has raged with terrible earnestness, of which a faint after-glow is discernible on the pages of Dr. Dawson's review of the latest phases of the discussion.

In 1894, Dr. S. E. Dawson of Ottawa prepared for the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Canada an elaborate treatise, in which he undertook to establish the location of the spot whereon English feet first trod the soil of North America. Mr. Harris of Paris had previously shown, with great learning, that every sixteenth-century map which offers any information upon this subject, with a single exception, describes Labrador as the country discovered by Englishmen from Bristol. This discovery was made by Cabot in 1497, and there are three or four documents dated in that year, which contain everything which is now known with

certainty in regard to what was actually accomplished by him. The data embodied in these documents prove conclusively that the newly found land was markedly different in every noticeable respect from the inhospitable coasts of Labrador. Having thus shown the impossibility of a Labrador landfall Dr. Dawson next discovered that a mere assumption of probability is the only basis for the claims on behalf of Newfoundland, upon whose shores it had been supposed for more than two hundred years that the English voyager westward-bound might most naturally find his first landing-place. Continuing his studies, Dr. Dawson found that the descriptions of the landfall, as reported by Cabot, applied perfectly well to the country of Cape Breton.

A statement which is said to have been authorized by Sebastian Cabot mentions an island of St. John lying over against the landfall. An island of this name appears on many early maps, and Dr. Dawson published a series of tracings and sketches from these, which enabled him to produce a very strong presumption that the original of this island lay in the position of the present Scatari Island, off the easternmost point of Cape Breton. Confirmation for the theory thus established, that this point was Cabot's landfall, appeared to Dr. Dawson to be found on the only extant map of the fifteenth century which shows the American coast—the well-known La Cosa chart, of which an admirable half-size facsimile accompanies Dr. Dawson's latest paper. The theory that "the discovered cape" noted on this map represents Cape Breton, and that the adjacent English flags mark the southern coast of Newfoundland, seems to be somewhat more probable than are various other theories that it represents various other points on the North American coast. Another map, published before the middle of the sixteenth century, offers the clearest evidence in support of the Cape Breton landfall. This engraved map carries a statement that Sebastian Cabot made it in 1544, and it shows against Cape Breton a legend calling this the First Land Seen, which a marginal reference explains as meaning seen by John Cabot. This famous Cabot mappemonde, of which there is also an excellent large facsimile in the latest volume of the Royal Society of Canada, unfortunately raises more problems than it solves, and Dr. Dawson acted most wisely in establishing his case as best he could without its help.

In 1896, Dr. Dawson replied briefly to those who had expressed their inability to find conviction in his earlier essay, and now in his *Latest Phases* he has published an elaborate treatise upon those who continue to disagree with him. The value of his paper as an index to the spirit with which the controversy is being conducted in Canada, has been referred to already. Other excrescent features of the argument are treated by Dr. Dawson's principal opponent, in another part of this REVIEW. Stated briefly, the landfall question as it now stands, is this: Residents of the United States having made no serious claim that the spot lay within their territory, we may assume that it must have been somewhere on the Canadian coast. As for the exact location, Dr. Dawson has presented a much stronger argument in favor of Cape Breton than has yet been made

for any other claimant. The important fact remains unchallenged, out of all this much-belabored controversy, that English sailors landed on North America in the early summer of 1497.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Dawson took the landfall as the dominating theme for his Cabot studies. His writings reveal a power of historical perception, a command of the conditions essential to the solving of historical problems, and a capacity for conscientious study, combined with some literary skill, which ought to have produced a most valuable account of the Cabots and their achievements. All the material for such an essay is set forth in his three monographs. Nowhere else can be found a more satisfactory statement of the various problems which make up the story of their English career. What still remains to be written is a clear, conservative, well-balanced, scholarly account of what is known and what may be surmised about the Cabots and the English discovery of America. Perhaps Mr. Beazley of Oxford might have written such an account. The conditions under which his contribution to Cabot literature appears to have been produced, however, made this impossible. The Cabot quadricentennial gave wide publicity to the following supposition: "that North America is now so largely occupied by an English-speaking population, with all their vast energies and accumulated wealth, has been largely owing to the daring genius of Cabot." At about the same time, somebody projected a series of biographies, of three hundred odd pages each, of "The Builders of Greater Britain." Of course, a life of Cabot was forthwith ordered. Very luckily, the task was entrusted to a most competent man, with the result that this book is quite the most sensible thing that has been published about the Cabots since the appearance of Mr. Charles Deane's essay in the *Narrative and Critical History of America*. The difference between the two is that Mr. Deane found seven pages amply sufficient for all that he had to say in the shape of a connected account of the Cabots, whereas Mr. Beazley has endeavored to fill 263 pages with a narrative of this same sort. As in other Cabot volumes, bulk is secured by introducing into the narrative the text of original documents, upon which all scholarly opinions on the subject must of course be based. Mr. Beazley's only fault is that he does not distinguish frankly between a serious critical study of these documents, and a popular narrative intended to interest and instruct the intelligent public of Greater Britain. The work, as he has done it, is thoroughly satisfactory. The translations which he prints are in nearly every case his own versions from the original texts, and, as already suggested, his comments and interpretations are conservative, careful, and sensible beyond precedent in recent Cabotian discussions.

Mr. G. E. Weare is an authority upon the antiquities of the English Bristol. Perhaps this is the reason why, when he published a book about Cabot, it aroused the prejudices of nearly every well-known student of the subject, with the result that it has failed to receive such honest critical notice as it may justly claim to deserve. Much of what has been said about this book, moreover, has been so manifestly unfair and untrue,

that a disinterested statement of one or two points is only the part of fair play. Mr. Weare's book is doubtless in many respects very bad. He filled up a volume about the Cabots ; of necessity he appropriated a great deal of material from the works of other men, and in many cases he does not specify whence he copied. This practice, if one may judge from Mr. Beazley's book, does not seem to be regarded as a fault at the English universities. Mr. Weare printed the texts of documents which had been published elsewhere,—but where he could do so in London, he verified these texts, and in several cases his book contains a text more closely corresponding to the original manuscript than is elsewhere to be found in print. He also verified the translations which he copied, and both Dr. Dawson and, unwittingly, Mr. E. J. Payne have called attention to cases in which Mr. Weare has improved upon the versions of previous translators. Mr. Weare also published, for the first time, an interesting document recording the payment of John Cabot's pension, and he gave an exact reference to the place where the manuscript might be found. In another part of his book, he translated this document, and because he neglected to repeat the reference, some very harsh things have been said about him. In short, Mr. Weare's book is a useful repository of the Cabot documents, which may be consulted there, in their original languages and in English, more conveniently than anywhere else. Well-equipped students will continue to reply upon the more scholarly, and more expensive, volumes of Harisse and of Markham, whenever they wish to examine these documents. They will also recognize with pleasure the efforts of every other student who succeeds in adding, however slightly, to the accuracy and the exhaustiveness of the work done by these masters of learning and of scholarship.

GEORGE PARKER WINSHIP.

The First Republic in America ; an account of the Origin of this Nation, written from the records then (1624) concealed by the Council, rather than from the Histories then licensed by the Crown. By ALEXANDER BROWN, D.C.L. (Boston : Houghton Mifflin and Co. 1898. Pp. xxiv, 688.)

THIS book may be considered as constituting the third volume of the *Genesis of the United States* by the same author, published in 1890. It utilizes the valuable documents arranged chronologically in that work, and other papers, some of which have been found by the author since its publication. Many of these documents have not been accessible to the public before Dr. Brown commenced the arduous task of search for them. The result of his labor has been an invaluable addition to our knowledge of the history of the Virginia Colony, the pioneer of English occupancy of North America. Not the least interesting part of Dr. Brown's work is the publication of the correspondence between the King of Spain and his minister at London, relative to the settlement at Jamestown, the minister urging the throttling of the infant colony, and the King anxious that it